

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 01474 051145Z
ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: CALL ON PRESIDENT LAMIZANA

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 1446

1. DURING OUR CALL ON PRESIDENT LAMIZANA AFTERNOON
APRIL 3, MAIN SUBJECT DISCUSSED WAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VERNON JOHNSON ASKED
PRESIDENT TO DESCRIBE UPPER VOLTA'S PRIORITIES IN
TERMS OF ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. PRESIDENT
SAID THAT IN A COUNTRY AS POOR AND AS DEVOID OF RESOURCES
AS UPPER VOLTA, THE NEEDS IN ALL FIELDS WERE TREMENDOUS
AND IT WAS AN AGANIZING EXERCISE TO TRY TO GIVE PRIORITY
TO ONE OVER ANOTHER. NEVERTHELESS, HE SIAD, THE NEED
TO DEVELOP WATER RESOURCES BY DIGGING WELLS, BUILDING
DAMS, AND SETTING UP IRRIGATION PROJECTS HAD TO BE GIVEN
TOP PRIORITY IN ORDER TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION
IN SPITE OF DROUGHT CONDITIONS WHICH HE FELT WOULD
CONTINUE TO PLAGUE UPPER VOLTA IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 01474 051145Z

2. NEXT PRIORITY, AS PRESIDENT SAW IT, WAS THE BUILD-
ING OF ROADS AS LAND COMMUNICATIONS IN SAHELIAN STATES
WERE IN DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS. HE SAID THAT EVEN
WHEN FOOD WAS AVAILABLE IN ONE PART OF THE COUNTRY
IT COULD NOT BE TRANSPORTED TO OTHER AREAS WHERE
PEOPLE WERE STARVING BECAUSE OF LACK OF ADEQUATE

ROADS. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS RIDICULOUS TO ASK VOLTAN PEASANTS TO INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTION OF CEREALS AND CASH CROPS WHEN THEY HAD NO WAY OF GETTING THEIR PRODUCTS TO MARKET.

3. FINALLY, PRESIDENT SAID, THERE WAS NEED TO REBUILD THE HERDS OF CATTLE AND SMALL RUMINANTS WHICH HAD BEEN DECIMATED DURING THE DROUGHT OF 72-74. THERE HAD BEEN SOME INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE HERDS SINCE THEN BUT THE HEALTH OF THE ANIMALS AND THE QUALITY OF THE MEAT WAS POOR. THERE WAS NEED TO UPGRADE VETERINARY

SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE HEALTH OF ANIMALS BEFORE MENTIONING THE HEALTH OF RURAL PEOPLE WHERE THE NEEDS WERE OVERWHELMING BUT THIS WAS ONE OF THE AGONIZING DECISIONS THAT HAD TO BE MADE.

4. THE CONVERSATION WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND AND FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT. THE PRESIDENT APPEARED PARTICULARLY PLEASED WHEN JOHNSON MENTIONED UPPER VOLTA'S EXCELLENT RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND BASIC FREEDOM AND THE ORDERLY MANNER IN WHICH THE MILITARY REGIME APPEARED TO BE BRINGING THE COUNTRY BACK TO CIVILIAN CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. GRAHAM

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